

Hello Fellow Town Meeting Members,

I'm writing to let all know that SaveHillsHill, the group of which I'm a member, supports a YES vote on Article 49 (see attached statement), which includes the Hill's Hill project. This project's conditions strike the balance we seek between carefully managed recreation and habitat preservation.

I further urge **a YES vote to divide the motion**, should that come before the meeting. Unlike other project awards, the current vote language for Hill's Hill contains no reference to the contractual conditions CPAC placed on the Hill's Hill biking award. It is my belief that TMMs have the right to be fully informed about the nature of these embedded conditions, and that full opportunity for debate will provide that opportunity.

Be assured that it has never been the intention of SaveHillsHill to reject the award outright, only to encourage guardrails. As a group we believed a compromise was possible that would accomplish both goals: provide active recreation for youth while simultaneously designing, building, using, and maintaining Hill's Hill open space in a manner that preserves its natural assets.

I wish to thank the Park and Rec Commission for recognizing their dual role as caretakers of the natural areas in parks and as builders of active recreation. I would urge all TMMs to do the same by writing to the Park and Rec Commission. Robust affirmation of this dual role will encourage important collaborations across jurisdictions that will make our parks and open spaces simultaneously resilient environmentally and responsive to the needs of ALL Arlington residents.

I, with others in the SaveHillsHill group, feel the balance of passive and active recreation this project now embraces makes sense for Arlington.

And we look forward to engaging further around designing biking elements that respect the habitat at Hill's Hill during its build and use.

Sincerely,

Elaine Crowder, TMM Pct. 19, and the SaveHillsHill Team

STATEMENT FROM SAVE HILL'S HILL GROUP REGARDING ARTICLE 49

Submitted by Elaine Crowder, TMM Precinct 19

Our group, Save Hill's Hill, has long advocated for a balanced solution for any project at Hill's Hill. Following the successful addition of habitat-preserving funding conditions to the Community Preservation Act contract, **we now recommend a YES vote on Article 49.**

SUMMARY

The CPA funding for a mountain bike park at Hill's Hill woods, included in Article 49, has generated considerable public interest. The project challenges the town to find the right balance between habitat preservation and recreation at a rare, undeveloped, wooded parcel. The Save Hills Hill Group is ready to support the CPA Committee's conditioned funding of the project, because of CPAC funding guardrails intended to protect the site's habitat.

BACKGROUND

The Save Hill's Hill group has consistently promoted a compromise solution for the site. This means upgrading the unauthorized mountain biking trails at Hill's Hill and designing and building in a way that preserves the core wooded natural environment of this space. We would specifically limit habitat harming construction (primarily the Pump Track) to outside of the main woods/meadow to protect this area, which hosts many native trees (oaks, hickories, cherries) and shrubs (blueberry, blackberry).

Our vision is a restored core natural setting - a respite for kids, animals and walkers. Furthermore, habitat restoration projects with local schools would address the anxiety our young people feel around climate change.

Public Opinion

Opposition to the mountain biking project has been high. Half of correspondents opposed the project during the early PRC feasibility reviews. During recent CPAC hearings, over 60% of letters opposed the project. Many noted the lack of written habitat protections and the Pump Track.

CPAC SOLUTION

The Community Preservation Act Committee heard the public and acted accordingly. They voted unanimously to add restrictions to the funding to "provide additional assurance that the wooded, natural environment of Hill's Hill will be preserved," providing funds "...only if the following **requirements** are met:

1. A member of the Open Space Committee be incorporated into the project's Working Group
2. A tree inventory be completed during the design process
3. The chosen designer be directed to advance at least two concept alternatives for the location of the pump track. If the preferred concept places the pump track in the woods, then the applicant will need to seek final authorization from the Community Preservation Act Committee prior to proceeding with construction; otherwise, no final authorization to proceed is necessary."

STATEMENT FROM SAVE HILL'S HILL GROUP REGARDING ARTICLE 49
Submitted by Elaine Crowder, TMM Precinct 19

SAVE HILL'S HILL SUPPORTS A "YES" ON ARTICLE 49

The CPAC conditions advance the goal of preserving the natural environment at Hill's Hill. This is a big win for the Save Hill's Hill compromise position, promoting both preservation and recreation. With CPAC's conditions in place, we now support the Article 49 recommendation for Hill's Hill *.

CPAC expects that substantial public input will "play a crucial role during the design process." Together with an engaged public we will be watching closely as this project develops, to ensure that Park & Recreation meets its contractual obligation to fulfill the three grant conditions, crafted to assure that "the wooded, natural environment of Hill's Hill will be preserved."

The Save Hill's Hill team

www.SaveHillsHill.com

Note:

* If a Motion to Divide the CPAC vote from Article 49 comes up, we urge a vote in favor so that this issue can be aired before Town Meeting

> Article 49 CPAC Report can be found at:

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/64821>